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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO : AmEmbassy LONDON
 AmEmbassy THE HAGUE
 AmConsulate PARAMARIBO
 POLAD for CINCSO
 POLAD for CINCIANT

FROM : AmConsulate GEORGETOWN

SUBJECT : British Desire to Settle Boundary Between British Guiana and Surinam

REF :

DATE: December 9, 1965

In the course of a discussion on December 8 with British Governor Luyt, he mentioned the desirability of settling the boundary between British Guiana and Surinam before independence. The Governor indicated that Surinam seemed to be reluctant to engage in talks about the border for fear of appearing somehow to be accepting the border as viewed by British Guiana. Nevertheless, the Governor thought that arrangements would be made to hold talks with The Netherlands in either London or The Hague and that a settlement could be reached. The border has been regarded both in British Guiana and in Surinam as being along the British Guiana shore of the Corentyne River. The Governor said that both British Guiana and Surinam are prepared to accept this shore of the river as the boundary, although British Guiana's right to use the waterway would also be recognized.

The unsettled part of the boundary arises in the following two areas:

(1) At the point where the New River flows into the Corentyne, Surinam claims that the New River together with the Oronoque River forms the boundary, while British Guiana claims that the Corentyne River continues to be the boundary (the area in dispute is uninhabited jungle forest).

(2) The division of the sea, i.e. the continental shelf, extending outward from Springlands, British Guiana, is in dispute. The Dutch claim that the boundary should run more or less straight out from Springlands, while the British maintain that in accordance with generally recognized modern methods of such calculations, the line should be equidistant from the nearest point in both countries; the disputed area, therefore, is a triangular piece of the sea with the apex at Springlands.

GROUP 4 - Downgraded at 3 year intervals; declassified after 12 years

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Drafted by:

DRCarlson:rjg

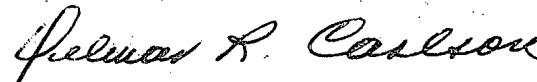
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Contents and Classification Approved by:

Clearances:

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According to the Governor, nations may claim the continental shelf off-shore to any distance as long as the depth is not over 200 feet. He said that the depth off British Guiana and Surinam does not exceed 200 feet for a distance of about 100 miles. Conceivably, the disputed area off-shore could be important in the event of a discovery of oil. He mentioned that both British Guiana and Surinam have given out oil leases covering this disputed area. Nevertheless, the Governor was optimistic that the boundary could be settled, probably by a package deal involving compromise on both sides.



Delmar R. Carlson
American Consul General

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